



Historic Black Powder Weapons Safety Regulations – North Bridge April 16, 2007

The Commemoration of the Concord Conflict / North Bridge will involve an extensive amount of historic weapons firing demonstrations featuring 18th century small arms. All firing demonstrations will be done according to National Park Service black powder safety regulations, under the direct supervision of certified NPS Black Powder Safety Officers (BPSO's) who will have the final say on the conduct of all historic weapons firing demonstrations. Safety is our primary concern, and our common goal.

Before a unit can participate in the North Bridge event, each unit commander must sign a Historic Weapons Firing Permit (included in this document). The permit must be signed by the unit commander and returned to the event Black Powder Safety Officer by mail or fax two weeks prior to the event. In signing the permit, the unit commander indicates that he/she has read and understands the regulations, has communicated the same to his/her troops and will comply with them fully.

Acceptable Weapon Types

Only reproduction firearms may be used at this event. The use of original firearms is prohibited.

Reproduction small arms that will be allowed for this event are:

- Early to mid-18th century flintlock muskets, fusils, or fowling pieces.
- British Long Land Pattern
- British Short Land Pattern
- French Charleville

Reproduction small arms that will not be allowed for this event are:

- Pistols
- Blunderbusses
- 18th century flintlock rifles
- Percussion-cap weapons

Weapon Safety and the Public

To ensure the safety of participants and the many thousands of visitors who attend North Bridge, a high degree of weapon discipline is expected of each and every participant.

- All weapons will remain under physical control of its owner at all times.
- No weapon is to be left unattended.
- Visitors are not allowed to handle or touch a loaded weapon.
- Visitors may touch an unloaded weapon so long as the owner maintains physical control of it. **DO NOT HAND YOUR WEAPON TO VISITORS.**
- Participants under the age of 16 may not handle weapons (firearms or edged weapons).
- **NEVER** point your weapon (firearm or edged weapon) at anyone at anytime.

Appropriate Drill Manuals

Appropriate drill manuals will be used by all participants handling/demonstrating historic weapons at the event. Acceptable manuals are:

- 1764 Manual Exercise
- Pickering's
- Von Steuben's (not actually appropriate for 1775, but acceptable on grounds of safety)

Ammunition

- All black powder brought into the park must be in the form of prepared cartridges. Bulk or loose black powder is absolutely prohibited.
- Cartridges will contain no more than the maximum load size for the weapon being carried. "Brown Bess" or Charleville musket: no more than **125 FFg**.
- Cartridges containing any amount of **FFFg** powder are strictly prohibited and will not pass inspection.
- Cartridges containing flour, oatmeal, or any other inappropriate substance are strictly prohibited and will not pass inspection.
- Cartridge tubes will be constructed of sturdy paper only. Cartridges containing paper clips, tape, or staples are strictly prohibited and will not pass inspection.
- Powder contained in powder horns is strictly prohibited.
- Participants under age 16 may not handle powder.

Inspections

- All small arms used in firing demonstrations will be inspected by a National Park Service BPSO. Weapons that fail inspection may not be carried on the field.
- All ammunition brought on site will likewise be inspected.
- Inspections will take place in the Monument St. Parking Area. The only exception is Acton who will be arriving on site by the Buttrick Mansion and will be inspected there.
- **Inspection for the Provincial forces will be from 7:45 – 8:00**
- **Inspection for Crown forces will be from 8:00 – 8:15**
- Weapons must meet the following standards to pass inspection
 1. secured flashguard and hammer stall
 2. no cracks or splits in the stock
 3. furniture and barrel fit securely to stock
 4. no missing stock pins or screws
 5. lock works smoothly
 6. half-cock position works properly
 7. flint is secured by leather or lead
 8. steel and spring are in good condition
 9. barrel free from visible dents or cracks
 10. no excessive rust or corrosion on the barrel, lock and touch hole
 11. no fouling in the barrel or on the lock*

*In regards to fouled barrels, a fouled weapon indicates a poorly maintained weapon and an irresponsible owner. Therefore, make sure your weapon is in good working order before you arrive.

Firing Procedures

- All firing demonstrations taking place on park property may only be done under the direct supervision of a Certified BPSO.
- Ramrods may not be drawn on the field during firing demonstrations. Loading will be accomplished by pouring the powder down the barrel and securing the paper – as in a reenactment.
- For protection from flash burns, all demonstrators firing black powder firearms will wear natural fiber, long-sleeved outer garments or full uniforms as appropriate to their historical impression.
- Range safety standards will be observed at all times. Firing will commence or cease at the discretion of the supervising BPSO.

Misfire Procedures

Failure to spark:

1. Call out “misfire”
2. Return to the priming position
3. Check priming and flint. Wipe down the steel. If working with the flint, attach the hammerstall and dump priming.
4. Re-prime if necessary
5. Return to the shoulder position and continue the firing procedure when ordered to do so by your company officer.

Flash in the pan:

1. Call out “misfire”
2. Return to the priming position
3. Half-cock the piece, and reattach the hammerstall.
4. Pick out the touch-hole, wipe off the steel and flint and re-prime.
5. Return to the shoulder position and continue the firing procedure when ordered to do so by your company officer.

If, after following these procedures, the weapon still misses fire, you may retry three more times. If the weapon still will not fire, dump the charge and priming. The weapon is now out of the action.

Edged Weapons

- Edged weapons (swords, bayonets, knives, hatchets, spontoons, halberds etc.) may be drawn and brandished in a safe and prudent manner, when the bearer and the weapon are behind a barrier in a secure area out of the reach of visitors, i.e. officers carrying swords during the tactical demonstration, or infantrymen in a bayonet demonstration).
- At no time may participants engage in simulated combat with edged weapons or simulated edged weapons.
- When not behind a barrier, out amongst visitors, swords, knives, bayonets and the like may not be fully drawn. They may be partially drawn enough to expose some of the blade for visual inspection for interpretive purposes, but no visitor may touch the blade.
- At no time may muskets be fired with the bayonet fixed.



Historic Black Powder Weapons Firing Permit/ North Bridge

Before a unit can participate in a living history event involving historic black powder weapons at Minute Man NHP, each unit commander must sign a Historic Weapons Firing Permit, which includes a copy of the Historic Black Powder Weapons Safety Regulations. This permit must be signed by the unit commander and returned to the event Black Powder Safety Officer by mail or fax two weeks prior to the event. The regulations are also available as a PDF file at

<http://www.nps.gov/mima/supportyourpark/reenactor-resource.htm>

Mail the completed permit to:
Historic Weapons Supervisor
Minute Man National Historical Park
174 Liberty St.
Concord MA.
01742
Or fax to: (978) 318 – 7800

Unit Name: _____
Commander's Name: _____
Expected number of troops: _____
Mailing Address: _____
City / State / Zip: _____
Telephone: (home) _____ (work) _____ (cell) _____
Email: _____

Please tell us about your unit's drill, weaponry, and the kinds of historic weapons demonstration programs you like to do.

In signing this permit, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the Historic Black Powder Weapons Safety Regulations and have communicated the same to all participating members of my unit and will comply with them fully.

Commander's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Historic Weapons Supervisor

_____ Date: _____

